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UNCLAS STATE 049277

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E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: URGENT DARFUR DEMARCHE FOR AVIATION SUPPORT AND  
ENABLING ASSETS

¶1. This is an action request. See para 2. Aviation assets are needed to support UN-AU hybrid peacekeeping operation in Darfur (UNAMID). Following is a list of the aviation assets for which UNAMID still lacks any contributions:

- 4 attack helicopters close air support
- 18 utility helicopters for sector support
- 3 fixed wing for aerial reconnaissance

¶2. Action addressees are requested to demarche host governments at the Ambassadorial or DCM level to request that host country work with the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations (UNDPKO) and the United States Government to provide the critical aviation support listed below. The Department recognizes that some action addressees have already requested their host country to consider providing aviation assets to UNAMID. Action addressees in countries that previously made offers to UNDPKO are requested to revisit those offers in light of possible U.S. assistance in fulfilling mission requirements (see paras 5-7). The United States will engage UNDPKO in direct discussions to determine the specific aviation UN requirements to include the host country's previously rejected offers (in the cases of Jordan, Bangladesh and Pakistan) and is prepared to consider specific targeted requests for USG assistance in upgrading those aviation assets that failed UNDPKO deployment requirements. Department believes that senior-level calls could follow Embassy efforts where appropriate. The President and the Secretary believe the USG must exhaust all efforts to secure these assets for UNAMID. Department therefore requests Embassies to make every reasonable effort to engage senior-level host nation authorities in a discussion regarding their willingness to offer (or renew an offer) for the deployment of their aviation assets to UNAMID. In addition, Embassies are requested to provide Washington with a preliminary assessment of whether USG assistance with training and/or equipment upgrades might significantly increase the host government's capacity to deploy these assets. For example, the USG may be able to assist in training pilots in the use of night vision devices. Embassies should alert host countries that USG officials are engaging with UNDPKO to ensure that subsequent USG efforts to make host country air assets mission-capable will be approved for deployment by UNDPKO. In this regard, Embassies are further requested to assure host countries that the USG is prepared to assist them in their discussions with UNDPKO in support of their aviation contribution to UNAMID.

¶3. Deadline: the deadline for Embassies to respond is May 12, 2008 (Department welcomes any interim reports prior to the response date).

¶4. Background: The United Nations-African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) is one of the Department's top priorities. UNAMID currently lacks critical aviation, transportation and logistical capabilities. UNAMID's mandate calls for a predominantly African force, and it has received pledges and actual contributions from many African infantry units (including from Rwanda, Nigeria, Senegal, Ghana, Burkina Faso, Mali, and Malawi). Nevertheless, UNAMID still lacks commitments for critical force multipliers/enablers, including aviation, logistical and transportation support assets. The Department wishes to assist host nations in their rapid deployment of available aviation assets to Darfur, which is a critical part of our strategy for sustainable peace in Darfur and central to the success of UNAMID. Given Darfur's large territory and difficult terrain, the lack of combat-capable attack helicopters deprives UNAMID ground forces of the close air support that could be necessary to conduct effective civilian protection operations against well-armed adversaries, while the absence of military utility helicopters prevents UNAMID from sending rapid reaction forces to reinforce ground troops confronted by hostile forces in remote combat zones. Host countries that may be able to respond positively to this request and wish to contribute assets to UNAMID should be asked to bring their capabilities to the urgent attention of the Embassy and UNDPKO in New York. The United States welcomes the opportunity to engage DPKO in direct discussions of the UN's requirements to include the host country's previously rejected offers (in the cases of Jordan, Bangladesh and Pakistan) and is prepared to offer and consider specific targeted requests for USG assistance in upgrading those assets.

¶5. For Embassy Kyiv: The Department recognizes that this demarche request comes as Ukraine is still considering a December request from UNDPKO to transfer its helicopter assets to UNAMID from UNMIL. President Bush has also raised this issue with President Yushchenko. The Department understands this decision is still pending with the Government and ultimately requires approval by the Parliament. Embassy should inquire into the status of this request as it currently represents our single best and quickest option for deploying the needed air assets to Darfur. The USG stands ready to assist if these or other assets are authorized by the GOU. Department notes Ukraine is observing the Orthodox Easter-Labor Day holiday and response will follow later.

¶6. For Embassy Islamabad: Pakistan pledged a fixed wing unit of three Aerial reconnaissance air craft in September 2007, but the offer was rejected due to the aircraft's limited technical capability to conduct reconnaissance (need for better electronics and cameras, etc). Pakistan is currently looking at ways of enhancing the capability with third party support if necessary, according to UNDPKO. Dept recognizes that Ambassador and DCM are currently away from post but requests that Embassy present this demarche to appropriately senior civilian and/or military officials.

¶7. For Embassy Dhaka: A Bangladesh offer of five Bell Utility helicopters was declined by UNDPKO, because these helicopters would not provide the required capacity to transport a company-sized quick reaction force.

¶8. For Embassy Amman: Jordan pledged Utility Helicopters in August 2007, but the offer was rejected mainly due to the aircraft's limited capabilities for night vision and potential fuel limitations.

¶9. Point of contact: Colonel Lawrence Mrozinski, IO/PSC, 202-736-7930, Mrozinskilg@state.sgov.gov.  
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